AUGUST 2022 NEWSLETTER

W.P.B. Greenscare Standing Committee

Annual Renovation

Our Greenscare Committee has an arrangement with WPBA not to schedule any WP Competitions after 15 November each year. This allows Clubs to carry out their renovations at a time when root growth is at its maximum and the grass is likely to recover fastest.

Here is a quick summary of the life-cycle of the grass plant:

- In late winter (July/August) the leaves become dormant and leaf growth ceases. In the meantime, the roots are still actively storing up "FOOD" (Carbohydrates) in the stems and larger roots.
- In early September leaf growth is again initiated but the roots retract and "die back" from mid-September till about end of October. During this period the leaves are active and now dependent for their nutrition on the carbohydrates stored in the stems.

It would be inadvisable for a GKP to attempt any aggressive scarifying during the period of "Root Die Back" The explanation for this is that with scarifying during Root Die Back, by November the stored carbohydrates which were left after scarifying become depleted.

GKPs should take note of this phenomenon and avoid renovating a Green between mid- September and end of October if possible. We are aware that Club priorities (i.e., Fundraising events) influence the renovation programme. But experience shows that the turf takes time to recover when renovation takes place too early.

Soil samples

If you have not done this already, we urge you to send samples to your nearest laboratory for analysis. Without this annual check, the GKP is really "flying blind". The pH can change, there can be a micro-nutrient imbalance, there can even be a damaging increase in the nematode population. If detected early, these problems can be rectified.

Levels

The Cubitt Excel Workbook was developed for BSA by Ron Cubitt and accepted as the standard for arranging Green Level Grids and presenting levels. It requires readings to be taken at 2m intervals and provides, among other things, a score for the levels out of 30. As BSA will not accept any other alternatives, we suggest you advise whoever is taking the levels for your Club to apply the 2m intervals and present the levels in the Cubitt format rather than contours.

While on the matter of levels, Bill McCarthy has provided evidence of how radically the levels can change from one year to another. His score after renovation last year was a commendable 27/30. This year, prior to renovation, his score on the same green is 17/30. The profile indicates the combined influence of heavy traffic and wet greens, particularly in the 2m areas.

Greenscare Committee

Vernon Dryden has been nominated as Convenor of this committee for the new season. Trevor Wheeler will assume the role of Secretary. They will be supported by Collyn de Witt, Bill McCarthy, Nic Marais and Terry Hepworth. Terry Drew will be relocating and has therefore had to withdraw from the committee. We thank him for his contribution to the work of the Committee.

Vernon and his team express the hope that GKPs throughout the District continue to share their greenkeeping successes and challenges with them.